Milk Tests Hurting Dairymen

PALMYRA, Wis. (UPI) — A new Wisconsin agriculture department machine is protecting state health by uncovering insecticide residue in milk, but it's threatening to put already-pinched diary farmers out of business.

Last week two cases of DDT residue in milk were reported, and the department banned the milk from market pending further tests. Wednesday the Milwaukee health department confirmed that three more cases were found.

State law forbids any adulteration of milk, so the farmers are dumping thousands of pounds of milk daily while they wait for their milk to be cleared again. They are losing an average of $40 to $60 gross a day.

"We can't sell these cattle or the milk and we have the same work load that we had before, but we've got no income now," said one dairyman, whose 40 head produce about 1,100 pounds of milk daily.

Donald Raffel, director of dairy inspection for the agriculture department, said Wednesday three of the cases involved only borderline danger.

No one seems to know just what is causing the problem. One theory, advanced by some state officials, is that the contamination comes from silage made from forage after corn is picked. The farmers said they were told DDT might be stored in the fat of the cattle.